



RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL RIGHTS
EXECUTIVE

DANIEL H. KRICHBAUM, PhD
DIRECTOR

For Immediate Release
March 25, 2013

Contact: Jacki Miller
Public Information Officer
313/456-4694
Millerj31@Michigan.gov

**New Report Highlights Progress, Remaining Challenges for
Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers**
*Civil Rights Commission hears update three years after initial call
to action*

Lansing—The Michigan Civil Rights Commission (MCRC) today received a report detailing three years of effort to improve the living and working conditions for the state's 90,000 migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFW). The report, entitled *Directors' Level Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Workgroup Progress Report*, highlights the work of the nine state agencies who responded to the MCRC's call to action.

The agencies involved in the Workgroup are: Department of Civil Rights, Department of Human Services, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Department of Education, Michigan State Police, the Workforce Development Agency, and the Secretary of State.

"Three years ago, the Michigan Department of Civil Rights (MDCR) created the Directors' Level MSFW Workgroup in response to the recommendations the Michigan Civil Rights Commission made in its report on the conditions faced by migrant and seasonal farmworkers in Michigan," the report says. "Inspired by the Commission's findings, MSFW Workgroup members committed themselves to work together to address each of the recommendations."

The initial report, *A Report on the Conditions of Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers in Michigan*, was adopted in March 2010 following a year-long investigation of living and working conditions. The report contained 15 recommendations to improve conditions for MSFWs and their families. Among the recommendations were: expanded inspections of licensed migrant housing, stronger enforcement of minimum wage laws, improved law enforcement training, streamlined services for MSFW and improved access to drinking water and sanitation.

Today's report looks at the progress made on each recommendation as well as the work yet to be done.

-more-

Progress made over the last three years includes:

- Expansion of in-season inspections to ensure the safety of licensed MSFW housing (see page 2);
- Increased outreach to ensure the children of migrant families are enrolled in and attending school (see page 45);
- Revised guidelines for law enforcement to better clarify laws and regulations affecting the enforcement of immigration laws (see page 28).

Perhaps most important for the long-term success of coordinated efforts, the report highlights the significant improvement in coordinated efforts among the agencies since the Directors' Level Workgroup began meeting.

"One particularly striking outcome the MSFW Workgroup notes at the outset is the beneficial change that was created through the frequent contact, communication, and partnership between stakeholders," the report says in its introduction. "The level of trust and understanding that otherwise would not have been possible without the focus created by the Commission's recommendations is considerable, and the effects of that trust profound."

To read today's report and the original 2010 report, go to www.michigan.gov/mdcr.

###

Only Fair Is Fair.

